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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHPB
DE RUEHHI #0630/01 0761032

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 171032Z MAR 06

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1154

INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 0725

RUEHZS/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 2898

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5471

RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0851

RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0643

RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0211

RUEHRO/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY

RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 1340

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//

RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1A//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 HANOI 000630

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC (PBATES), OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA), AND MED STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCARROLL, SCLEMENTS AND PCHAPLIN)

STATE PASS TO USTR (ELENA BRYAN)

STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTIEGER, EELVANDER AND ABHAT)

USDA PASS TO APHIS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)

BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID (MFRIEDMAN AND JMACARTHUR)

ROME FOR FAO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO KFLU AMED AMGT CASC EAGR PINR SOCI VM

SUBJECT: VIETNAM: MARCH 17 AVIAN INFLUENZA REPORT

REF: HANOI 561 AND PREVIOUS

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¶1. (U) Summary. There have been no new human Avian Influenza (AI) deaths since late October 2005 and no human cases since November 9, 2005. The Government of Vietnam (GVN) continues to report no AI outbreaks in poultry since the last reported incident on December 17, 2005. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Cao Duc Phat, has agreed to a proposal to vaccinate all flocks of "ngan" duck, despite a pilot vaccination of ducks resulting in only 40 percent immunity rates. End Summary.

¶2. (U) As of March 17, 2006:

-- No human AI deaths since October 29, 2005

-- No new human AI cases since November 9, 2005

-- No AI outbreaks in poultry since the last reported incident on Dec. 17, 2005 in Cao Bang Province

¶3. According to local press, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Cao Duc Phat, has agreed to a proposal to vaccinate all flocks of "ngan" species of duck, despite a pilot vaccination of ducks that resulted in only 40 percent immunity rates among the study population. The Animal Health Department of MARD put forth the proposal at a meeting of the National Steering Committee for Bird Flu Prevention in Hanoi on March 14. The Institute allegedly

proposed administering the H5N1 vaccine on both chickens and ducks since the nationwide vaccination for poultry has shown "encouraging results."

¶ 14. Liberated Saigon Newspaper reported that a large amount of poultry smuggled from China is once again finding its way into Vietnam, stating the price gap between the two countries is the driving force behind this illegal and unsafe activity. Head of the Animal Health Division of Quang Ninh Province Mr. Doan Duy Ai stated that local police and market control authorities have detected seven cases of poultry smuggling along the Vietnam-China border. Four tons of chickens and 126,000 eggs have been destroyed. Mr. Ai added that only a small portion of the smuggled products are sold in Quang Ninh, while the rest is transported to other localities, including Hanoi.

¶ 15. The news report further stated that illegally imported poultry has not been properly controlled in Cao Bang, a northern border province. The report stated that after three poultry veterinary stations en route to Cao Bang town were shut down, the transport of poultry has taken place without inspections. Several animal officials admitted to the difficulty in detecting and seizing illegally imported poultry due to the length of the border and limitations of local authorities. Price disparities between China and Vietnam are fueling the smuggling of poultry south of the border. The report stated that poultry prices in China are roughly VND20,000 (US\$1.25) per kilogram compared to poultry prices ranging between VND40,000 and VND48,000 (US\$2.50 and US\$3.00) per kilogram in Vietnam.

¶ 16. During March 14-16, approximately 100 researchers and clinicians gathered in Hanoi for the first meeting of the Southeast Asia Influenza Clinical Research Network, a

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multilateral collaborative partnership committed to advancing clinical research with a focus on influenza. Partners currently include the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Oxford University, UK, WHO, Mahidol University, Wellcome Trust, the University of Indonesia, as well as hospitals and institutions in Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. The study to be initially conducted by the network is entitled a "High-Dose versus Standard-Dose Oseltamivir for the Treatment of Severe Influenza and Avian Influenza: A Phase II Double Blind, Randomized Clinical Trial." This study is planned to be conducted at sites in Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia and is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2006. Five of the 11 medical institutions chosen for the pilot therapy are in Vietnam, including the Institute of Tropical Diseases of Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi, the Central Pediatrics Hospital in Hanoi, the Hospital of Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), and Children's Hospitals I and II in HCMC.

¶ 17. On March 13, the Embassy's Consular Chief visited Bach Mai Hospital to discuss AI preparations as well as general facilities for private Americans. Bach Mai Hospital is designated as the primary health facility for Hanoi to receive foreign patients in the event of an AI outbreak. According to the Director of the Hospital's Institute of Infectious Disease, foreigners will be given the same consideration as Vietnamese citizens in the event of an AI outbreak. The Institute has 120 beds with four rooms specifically designated for foreigners; if necessary, however, all beds at the hospital will be used for AI and other patients would be sent elsewhere. Two other hospitals in Hanoi designated for AI have 300 beds for a total of 420. If hospital beds become full in an outbreak, the GVN plans to use schools for treating serious AI cases. The Institute has only seven or eight functional respirators. The Director stated that the Institute has 600,000 doses of Tamiflu, the equivalent of 30,000 treatment courses. The Director also indicated that 20 million additional tablets

have been ordered from Roche and are expected in May or June.

¶ 18. Last week, Post's Health Attaché and HHS/CDC Influenza Coordinator met with members of the International Emerging Infectious Disease Program (IEIP) in Bangkok. Over the next six months, IEIP will be conducting four laboratory training courses in Bangkok for mid-level laboratory technicians from Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. A separate course in Vientiane will be given to technicians from Laos. Each course will enhance skills in use of RT-PCR method for nine to twelve students. In August, IEIP plans to conduct a train-the-trainer course on rapid outbreak response techniques to 75 responders from the region. The course curriculum is being developed by the University of North Carolina.

¶ 19. Post's Health Attaché and HHS/CDC Influenza Coordinator also met last week with the Charge d'Affairs, Political Officer and HHS/CDC Influenza Coordinator of Embassy Vientiane. Discussions centered on possible collaboration on epidemic preparedness planning and laboratory capacity strengthening between Vietnam and Laos.

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MARINE